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BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1959

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

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P U B L I C H E A L T H S T A F F

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH (also Divisional M.O. Herts. C.C.).

VICTOR R. WALKER, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.,
Divisional Health Office,
12 Brand Street,
Hitchin.
(Telephone: Hitchin 3757).

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR.

RONALD A. D. GATES, M.A.P.H.I.

RODENT OPERATOR.

J. REDHOUSE.

BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

By direction of Ministry Circular 1/60 I submit a report on the health of your district for the year 1959.

The local vital statistics again give a favourable picture. The birth rate (16.8) is just above the national figure while the death rate (10.3) is well below that for England and Wales. While the local stillbirth rate was somewhat higher than nationally, the infant mortality under 1 year figure was nil.

Apart from an epidemic of measles in the Spring there was no serious local occurrence of infectious disease during the year.

I would again acknowledge having received during the year every consideration and help from your Council and its Officers.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

V. R. WALKER.

District Medical Officer of Health.

May, 1960.

Section A — LOCAL STATISTICS

Area of District	542 acres.
Population - Registrar General's Estimate for mid-1959	7,170
Number of separately rated hereditaments at 31st March, 1960	2,348
Number of separate dwellings (included in above figure) at 31st December, 1959	1,883
Rateable Value at 1st April, 1960	£76,216
Estimated Sum Represented by a Penny Rate	£350

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1959

				BaLDOCK URBAN DISTRICT	Comparable Rate for England and Wales
LIVE BIRTHS	Totals	Male	Female		
Legitimate	110	54	56		
Illegitimate	10	6	4		
	120	60	60		
Rate per 1,000 population				16.8	16.5
Illegitimate Live Births per cent of total live births				8.3	
STILL BIRTHS	Totals	Male	Female		
Legitimate	5	5	-		
Illegitimate	-	-	-		
	5	5	-		
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births ...				40.0	20.7
TOTAL LIVE & STILL BIRTHS	Total	Male	Female		
	125	65	60		
DEATHS	Total	Male	Female		
	74	41	33		
Rate per 1,000 population				10.3	11.6
INFANT DEATHS	Total	Male	Female		
Under 1 week	-	-	-		
1 - 4 weeks	-	-	-		
4 - 52 weeks	-	-	-		
	-	-	-		
Infant Mortality Rates					
Total infant deaths per 1,000 total live births ...				Nil	22.0
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births				Nil	
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate live births ...				Nil	
Neo-natal Mortality Rate (deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 total live births)				Nil	15.8
Early Neo-natal Mortality Rate (deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births).				Nil	
Perinatal Mortality Rate (stillbirths and deaths under 1 week combined per 1,000 total live and still births...				40.0	
Maternal Mortality (including abortion)					
Number of deaths				None	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births				0.0	0.38

Comment on Vital Statistics. The estimated local population shows a further increase of 80 persons. Live births (120) were 23 less than for 1958 while deaths (74) were 21 above the exceptionally low figure for 1958.

SECTION B GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

No important change occurred during the year.

SECTION C SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Water Supply. All premises in the district are provided with a direct piped supply of water, which is treated and supplied in bulk to the Council's Undertaking by the First Garden City Ltd. The supply has been satisfactory both in quantity and quality and results of chemical analyses and bacteriological examinations of samples have also been satisfactory.

2. Sewerage & Sewage Disposal. No change.

3. Rivers and Streams. No change.

4. Closet Accommodation. No change

5. Public Cleansing. The purchase of the Council's new freighter in 1958 resulted in a weekly refuse collection from all premises and this has been maintained during the year except during the holiday periods. Requests from two of the larger food premises in the town for a more frequent collection in the interests of public health were received but these requests cannot be met at the present time.

6. Swimming Pool (Privately owned). The pool is of 100,000 gals. capacity with a turn over every 12 hours; water is passed through pressure filters, chlorinated and aerated. The pool which is only open during the summer months, is used by the factory employees, friends and organised school classes. Weekly visits are made to the pool and samples taken. A larger chlorine plant was installed to provide a higher dosage of free chlorine to the water and to give a greater bacteriological purity. Samples taken since the installation of this plant has shown the water to be satisfactory at all times.

7. Rodent Control. Normal rodent control work and treatment was carried out and only minor infestations found. All the Council's undertaking received regular attention and after the soil sewers again showed a marked absence of infestation the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food recommended that no further tests were necessary until 1961.

8. Sanitary Inspections of the Area (other than Dwellinghouses and food premises).

(a) Number of inspections carried out under the Factories Act	21
(b) Number of inspections carried out under the Petroleum Acts	13
(c) Number of inspections carried out in connection with drainage and sewerage	42
(d) Number of inspections carried out in connection with water supply and sampling	11
(e) Miscellaneous inspections	19
(f) Number of nuisances investigated and dealt with	19
(g) Number of investigations regarding infectious diseases	2

9. Factories & Workplaces. Routine inspections were made of 21 of the 34 factories. In 33 of the factories the Local Authority's duty is to enforce the provision of the Factories Act relating to sanitary conveniences, cleanliness, overcrowding, temperature and ventilation, and drainage of floors in the one non-mechanical factory.

All factories to which Section 34 of the Factories Act, 1937 applies have now been certified by the Local Authority as being provided with such means of escape in case of fire for the persons employed.

10. Clean Air Act, 1957. Observations were regularly carried out on all boiler house chimneys but little smoke nuisances were detected due to the plants being oil or coke fed.

11. Sanitary Conveniences on Farms. A survey of the 3 farms situated within the district showed that all were provided with external water-closets for the use of the workers. On the one farm where seasonal female labour is employed, a portable chemical closet is provided.

12. Improved public sanitary accommodation at Licensed Premises. During the year it has been pleasing to note at a small number of Licensed Premises the demolition of the substandard public sanitary accommodation and the erection of sanitary blocks with washing facilities.

SECTION D. HOUSING

Council Housing Schemes

(a) The development of the remaining land at the Anchor Field Housing Estate was discussed and the Council approved plans for the erection of 54 houses for the purpose of selling to sitting tenants and those persons on the housing list. The road works for this site commenced in November, 1959.

(b) The Council agreed to proceed in the acquisition of 60 acres held by the County Council forming part of the small holding estate, for housing purposes subject to the County Planning Authority issuing consent to the land being used for residential development.

(c) Two sites in the centre of the town were acquired for the erection of 10 aged persons flats. Plans were approved and the building work commenced in April, 1960.

Slum Clearance

During the year only one of the 6 unfit dwellings incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost was dealt with under the Housing Act, 1957. The difficulty of proceeding with the other dwellings has been to find suitable alternative accommodation for the tenants - 3 are aged persons.

Improvements Grants

During the year four applications for discretionary grants were submitted and approved. A total of 28 grants have been made since the inception of the scheme in 1949.

During the year the Housing Purchase & Housing Act, 1959, came into operation which set up a new system of standard grants to supplement the present discretionary grants. The standard grant is payable only for the provision of five specified amenities and the applicant is entitled to half of the cost in providing the amenities subject to a laid down maximum and the house being fit for a period of not less than 15 years. Much publicity was given by the officers of the Council to the benefits of both improvement grants but with little response.

A survey was made of all the Council's Pre-war houses to ascertain the total number lacking in one or more of the standard amenities. Out of a total of 261 houses, 220 were found to lack wash-handbasins and 30 a hot water supply. The first scheme to provide 22 houses with both a hot water supply and a wash-handbasin was commenced in February, 1960.

Inspection of Dwellinghouses during the Year

(1)	Number of dwellinghouses inspected (for housing defects under Public Health or Housing Acts)	10
	Number of inspections made for that purpose	33
(2)	Number of dwellinghouses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	2
(3)	Number of dwellinghouses (exclusive of those referred to under (2) above) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	8
(4)	Number of dwellinghouse in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices under the Public Health or Housing Acts:-	
	(a) By owners	-
	(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	-
(5)	Number of defective dwellinghouses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or its officers	6

SECTION E INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

(1) There were no special Clean Food Campaigns but food shops and food preparing premises were regularly inspected and opportunity taken to give advice on the clean handling of food to the personnel concerned. The Food Hygiene Regulations were brought to the notice of all occupants and in a number of cases informal action taken to bring the premises up to a satisfactory standard.

(2) The type of food premises are as follows:-

Butchers, 5; cafes, restaurants, snack bars, 7; confectioners, 6; dairies, 1; fish shops, 3; greengrocers and fruiterers 4; grocers and provision merchants, 4; bakehouses, 2; canteens, 2.

(3) Premises registered under Section 16 of the Food & Drugs act, 1955, Sale and storage of ice cream 16 (no ice cream is manufactured in the district); manufacture of meat products, 1.

(4) There are no slaughterhouses in the district.

(5) No food poisoning instances were reported in the year.

(6) The results of all 9 ice cream samples taken were Grade 1.

(7) The specified areas Scheme of 1954 remains in force. Under this, only Designated Milks such as Tuberculin Tested, Pasteurised and Sterilised may be sold in the district.

During the year four firms were issued with supplementary Licences to retail milk in Baldock from premises elsewhere. There is only one dairy and this is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture

(8) During the year 75lbs. of imported canned meat was condemned as unfit for human consumption.

SECTION F. Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases

For the year 1959 totals of acute infectious diseases notified were (after correction): Measles 185, Acute pneumonia 3, Erysipelas 4, Scarlet fever 2, meningococcal infection 1, peurperal pyrexia 1, and paratyphoid fever 1.

Measles was epidemic in the first 4 months of the year. Scarlet fever was almost absent and whooping cough not once notified. The one notified case of paratyphoid fever (an adolescent female) had presumably been infected in a rural district in Ireland, where she was resident in the three weeks immediately preceeding onset of illness.

Immunisation The measures against both whooping cough and diphtheria continue popular with parents of young children and are obtainable from both general practitioners and the welfare centre. The special sessions for vaccination against anterior poliomyelitis have also been well attended by the permitted age and special groups, who have also the same facilities available from their medical attendants.

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Deaths during the year 1959

Age Periods	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 - 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	(3)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	1 (4)	1 (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 45	(1)	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
45 - 55	(3)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
55 - 65	1 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 & over	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not known	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals:	2+(11)	1+(3)	-	1	-	-	-	-

Footnote: In addition to the new cases first notified within the district there is shown (in brackets) additional figures of cases transferred to the local registrar from other areas.

Comment: New local notifications are confined to 4 cases (3 respiratory and 1 non-respiratory) against a figure of two for the previous year.

No death from any form of tuberculosis occurred in the district during the year.

V. R. WALKER.
District Medical Officer of Health.

May, 1960.

APPENDIX

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 to 1949

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the Urban District of Baldock for the Year 1959

PART I OF THE ACT.

1. INSPECTIONS for the purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are enforced by Local Authority.....	1	1	-	-
(2) Factories not included in (1) which S.7 is enforced by Local Authority.....	32	19	1	-
(3) Other premises in which S.7 is enforced by the Local Authority.....	1	1	-	-
Total...	34	21	1	-

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found.

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	Referred By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	2	2			
Overcrowding (S.2).....					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6).....					
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient.....					
(b) Unsuitable or defective.....	1	1		1	
(c) Not separate for sexes.....					
Other offences against the Act.....	1	1		1	
Total..	4	4	-	2	-

PART VIII OF THE ACT

Outwork - Sections 110 and 111.

Number of out-workers NIL.

May, 1960.

V. R. WALKER
District Medical Officer of Health.